

# It's been a dreadful week. Humanity must prevail

14 Oct 2023

## Statement by Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, about the latest in Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the region

Civilians in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory are suffering from a week of utter anguish and devastation. I fear that the worst is yet to come.

In Israel, families are reeling from the horror of last Saturday's attack. More than a thousand people have been killed and many more have been injured. Over 100 people are held captive.

In Gaza, families have been bombed while inching their way south along congested, damaged roads, following an evacuation order that left hundreds of thousands of people scrambling for safety but with nowhere to go.

Nearly 2,000 people have been killed and many more have been injured.

There is no power, no water and no fuel. Food supplies are running dangerously low.

Hospitals, overwhelmed with patients, are running out of medicine.

Morgues are overflowing.

Homes, schools, shelters, health centers and places of worship are under intense bombardment.

Entire residential neighbourhoods have been razed to the ground.

Aid workers have been killed.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza, already critical, is fast becoming untenable.

In the West Bank, violence is on the rise, with a surge in civilian deaths and injuries. Families are facing ever greater movement restrictions.

And in Lebanon, the risk of the conflict spilling into the country is a major concern.

The parties' actions and rhetoric over the past few days are extremely alarming and unacceptable.

Even wars have rules, and these rules must be upheld, at all times, and by all sides.

Civilians and civilian infrastructure, including humanitarian workers and assets, must be protected.

Civilians must be allowed to leave for safer areas. And whether they move or stay, constant care must be taken to spare them.

Essential supplies and services and unimpeded humanitarian access must be allowed.

Anyone held captive must be treated humanely. All hostages must be released.

All countries with influence must exert it to ensure respect for the rules of war and to avoid any further escalation and spillover.

The past week has been a test for humanity, and humanity is failing.